United Nations A/ES-10/781–S/2018/458

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
16 May 2018

Original: English

General Assembly
Tenth emergency special session
Agenda item 5
Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Seventy-third year

Identical letters dated 14 May 2018 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

I write to bring to your urgent and immediate attention the horrific situation unfolding on the ground in the Occupied State of Palestine, including East Jerusalem, due to the escalation of Israel's illegal actions, including targeted attacks against the Palestinian civilian population, and the mounting casualties and tensions.

In particular, the occupying Power continues to intensify its military attacks against the civilian population in the besieged Gaza Strip in grave breach of international law, including international humanitarian law and the relevant provisions on the protection of civilians in armed conflict. The level of death and injury inflicted on Palestinian civilians by the Israeli occupying forces in the Gaza Strip has surpassed merely immoral, inhumane and unlawful behaviour to constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity, for which Israel must be fully held accountable.

The international community must no longer allow such carnage to be perpetrated against our people with impunity; our repeated pleas for international protection for the defenceless Palestinian people must no longer be ignored. Our people are defenceless and in desperate and urgent need of international protection and the protection of international law, which is being grossly, egregiously and systematically violated by the occupying Power.

As we write this letter, more than 38 Palestinian civilians, including at least six children, have been killed today by the Israeli occupying forces, and more than 2,000 civilians have been injured, many of them critically wounded by the barbaric forms of ammunition being deliberately used against them by the occupying Power. Tragically, this massacre raises the total number of Palestinian civilians killed to more than 80 since the six-week Great March of Return began on 30 March.

The escalation of Israel's aggression against the Gaza Strip, where unarmed Palestinian civilians at the Gaza border exercising their legitimate right to protest against this inhumane and absolutely illegal occupation continue to be wilfully

18-07980 (E) 180518

Please recycle

attacked and murdered by the Israeli occupying forces, threatens to further destabilize the situation on the ground and to ignite yet another round of deadly violence by Israel. We call on the international community, with the United Nations Security Council at the forefront, to act immediately in accordance with their obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and international humanitarian law to address this deepening crisis and prevent the complete destabilization of this situation.

In this regard, it must be stated that in the backdrop to the violence and volatility we are witnessing today is the provocative and illegal decision by the United States administration to officially move its embassy from Israel to the City of Jerusalem. This action — which is in blatant contravention of Security Council resolutions, including, inter alia, resolutions 476 (1980), 478 (1980) and 2334 (2016), and of the unequivocal prohibition of the acquisition of territory by force — has severely aggravated tensions and sensitivities, particularly at this time when the Palestinian people are marking the seventieth anniversary of their Nakbah, an ongoing tragedy whose wounds are deep and painful and continue to be deepened.

As a global and leading power, the United States had the ability to pressure Israel to end its violations against the Palestinian people, to respect international law and to create an environment that could break the political deadlock, bringing an end to Israel's 50-year occupation, and ensure a future of peace, security, prosperity and dignity for both the Palestinian and Israeli peoples. Regrettably, rather than doing so, it has only continued to foster Israel's intransigence and impunity, shielding it from international censure and any real measures to bring this illegal situation and injustice to an end.

This latest action by the United States in Jerusalem has clearly and dangerously emboldened the right-wing Government in Israel to carry out its illegal policies and practices, including the murder of innocent civilians in broad daylight, without any fear of consequence, and emboldens it to further consolidate its control and unlawful de facto annexation of the City, along with the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In this regard, we must recall the Security Council's unambiguous call on "those States that have established diplomatic missions at Jerusalem to withdraw such missions from the Holy City", as well as its determination that it "will not recognize any changes to the 4 June 1967 lines, including with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties through negotiations".

We call for respect of the Council's authority and decisions. These are facts and legislation that cannot be disregarded or ignored, regardless of political pretexts and illogical justifications. Moreover, we call for respect of the historic status quo at Jerusalem's holy sites, including at Haram al-Sharif, which continues to be subjected to provocations and incitement by Israeli extremists, as witnessed again just yesterday when Israeli extremist settlers broke into the Aqsa Mosque compound in large numbers under the protection of Israeli occupying forces and raised Israeli flags on the compound, provoking clashes with Muslim worshippers and Islamic Waqf guards there.

The unfolding situation makes it clear that, in word and deed, today's action by the current United States administration is not just inflaming an already volatile situation and provoking reckless violence, but also has the potential to further inflame religious sentiments of religious extremists, fuelling violent radicalism and strife in the region and beyond, with far-reaching repercussions. In the light of this extremely regrettable action as well as the unfolding dangerous situation on the ground, we call on the international community, in particular the Security Council, to address this critical matter without delay and to act swiftly to uphold its responsibilities for the maintenance of international peace and security, reaffirming the validity of the relevant resolutions and demanding full respect for them.

We call on all States to reject all of these illegal actions and to insist on respect for international law and the relevant resolutions, and to act in accordance with their legal obligations in this regard. This must include condemnation of Israel's illegal and criminal behaviour vis-à-vis the Palestinian people under its foreign occupation, and rejection and non-recognition of its colonization of our land and of attempts by any other States to entrench and support this entirely illegal situation.

First and foremost, however, we must urgently call on the Security Council to act now and make its voice heard to stop the carnage being perpetrated against our people, particularly now at this moment in the Gaza Strip. The Council must act on its responsibilities under the Charter to ensure respect by Israel, the occupying Power, including of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. This is an urgent matter and is central to preserving international rules, norms and moral standards in all cases, to saving innocent civilian lives and to preventing the collapse of this situation so as to salvage whatever slim chances may remain for a just peace. To this end, it is urgent and imperative that the Palestinian people under Israel's occupation be protected in accordance with the provisions of international humanitarian law.

Once more, given the extremely dangerous situation, we appeal to the Security Council to act urgently to avert the further destabilization of this extremely fragile situation, with due consideration for this sensitive juncture in the plight of the Palestinian people in the light of more than 50 years of the Israeli foreign occupation of their land and the marking, on 15 May 2018, of the passage of 70 years since the tragic Nakbah of the Palestinian people in 1948, a grave historical injustice that continues today and continues to pose a threat to international peace and security. Immediate measures are vital for restoring the primacy of international law in the efforts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and make possible the establishment of just and lasting peace, whereby the Palestinian people can live in justice, dignity and peace and exercise their inalienable rights, including to self-determination and freedom, in their independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and whereby a just solution can be found for the plight of Palestine refugees based on General Assembly resolution 194 (III).

At this critical and sensitive moment, the Palestinian people and their leadership, alongside all those around the world who believe in international law and the path of justice as the most viable path to peace, are looking to the Security Council with high expectations for it to shoulder its responsibilities, in accordance with its Charter duties. We thus reiterate our appeal to the Council to act to end the occupation's brutality and massacres against our people; to bring a halt to its massive violations of their human rights; to ensure their protection; and to firmly uphold and implement all Security Council resolutions on the question of Palestine, including with regard to Jerusalem.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine
to the United Nations